

February 20, 2009

Loebsack touts stimulus

Lawmaker spoke at IMU roundtable

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Iowa City Press-Citizen

Rep. Dave Loebsack, D-Mount Vernon, touted the recently signed economic stimulus package Thursday morning, saying it will provide more money and opportunities for college students and workers.

"As far as opportunities go ... education is so critical," said Loebsack to a group of a dozen University of Iowa students and financial aid counselors. "That's why we did what we did at the federal level."

Loebsack was at the Iowa Memorial Union for what was described as a roundtable discussion with UI students who told him their stories of working to get a college education. He spoke of federal lawmakers' moves to help revive the economy through the \$787 billion economic stimulus package President Obama signed into law Tuesday.

Included in the package, Loebsack said, was money for work study programs and \$14 billion to increase the maximum Pell Grants by \$500 to \$5,250. This is on top of the roughly \$184 million UI students receive in federal aid and grants.

"Clearly that's going to help (students) achieve what they're aiming for," he said.

Students who attended the roundtable said the current job market has left them discouraged.

Molly McAndrew, a sophomore in social work and political science from Lisbon, said she has heard from friends that jobs they had lined up for after graduation in May have been cut.

"Now they have no idea what they're going to do," she said. "They'll take anything."

Senior Bailey Noble said he is having trouble finding a job after he graduates in May with a degree in nursing.

"It's getting slightly more difficult to get placed," he said. "My situation is do I want to stay in school and get more debt. I never thought it would be hard to find a job."

Loebsack said the job situation for the students and other families might require even more money than what will be provided in the stimulus package.

"We may see families fall out of the middle class, or at least within the middle class," he said. "I'd like to be able to resolve that problem, but it takes more resources."
